

LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT

LANDMARK NAME: Herbert A. and Elizabeth Kipp House

OWNERS: Andrew and Elizabeth Stepanian

APPLICANTS: Same

LOCATION: 2455 Pine Valley Drive – River Oaks

AGENDA ITEM: II.C

HPO FILE NO: 13L277

DATE ACCEPTED: 03/26/2013

HAHC HEARING: 04/18/2013

SITE INFORMATION

Lot 19, Block 36, River Oaks Sec. 1, City of Houston, Harris County, Texas. The building on the site is a historic two-story brick residence.

TYPE OF APPROVAL REQUESTED: Landmark Designation

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

The residence at 2455 Pine Valley Drive, designed by Salisbury & McHale, was built in 1935 for Herbert A. and Elizabeth Kipp. Kipp was a Vice President at the River Oaks Corporation. He was a civil engineer responsible for the layout of all the subdivisions in River Oaks. He also developed plans for Hermann Park, Glenwood Cemetery and the Texas Medical Center. Much of what we see and experience in central Houston is the work of Herbert Kipp.

Hiram A. Salisbury and T. George McHale, doing business as Salisbury & McHale, created a substantial body of work that includes many of the iconic homes in River Oaks and Southampton, as well as St. John's School and the St. John's Chapel (in association with Mackie and Kamrath Architects). The Kipp House was designed in a traditional Colonial Revival style and incorporates some Spanish Revival elements.

The home is most significant for the first owners, Herbert A. and Elizabeth Kipp, and their contributions to Houston. The Herbert A. and Elizabeth Kipp House meets Criteria 1, 3, 4 and 6 for Landmark Designation.

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE

Herbert and Elizabeth Kipp

Herbert Albrecht Kipp was born in Indiana on December 7, 1884. By 1910, he was living in Washington, D.C. and working as a civil engineer where he dealt with land transactions and plats. He met his wife, Elizabeth North, in Washington, D.C., and they were married there in 1913. Elizabeth's ancestral home was Huntingdon, Pennsylvania, and Kipp would later name one of the streets in River Oaks "Huntingdon Place."

They moved to Beaumont where Kipp continued working as a civil engineer. In 1916, Kipp completed the topographical study of Hermann Park in Houston, which was used to plan the outer driveways around the park. By the early 1920s, they were living in Houston. In 1923, Kipp completed the engineering work for the Broadacres Subdivision. Also in 1923, Kipp designed the layout of the Country Club Estates subdivision for Thomas H. Ball, Thomas H. Guthrie, and T.W. House, Jr.

Kipp had laid out the original Country Club Estates subdivision prior to it being purchased by the Hogg Brothers and Hugh Potter, who would later re-christen it River Oaks. Stephen Fox wrote on page 70 of *The Country Houses of John F. Staub*:

...in August 1925, the Houston engineer Herbert A. Kipp, who laid out Country Club Estates and was retained by the Hoggs and Potter as consulting engineer, was made first vice president of the development company, a post he would hold until the company's dissolution in 1954. Some of the major street alignments visible in Hare and Hare's studies appear in the street plan of River Oaks, but Kipp was responsible for planning the twenty subdivisions that comprise River Oaks, the last of which was plated in 1947.

Of Kipp's street and lot plans for the River Oaks Corporation, Fox writes:

The site plan of Country Club Estates and the subsequent phases of River Oaks contributed to its aura of distinction. Kipp's plans spatially distinguished River Oaks from Broadacres, Shadyside, and Courtlandt Place by representing it as the country place alternative to what were antithetically construed as city neighborhoods. Kipp's plans for Country Club Estates, designed to be free-standing, was based on a curving grid of east-west streets (which he named for famous golf clubs), which gave almost all the house sites a north-south orientation and thwarted the endless vista effect that straight, urban streets produced in the coastal flatlands.

Country Club Estates incorporated one urban episode, a divided boulevard (initially called Ball Boulevard after one of the investors but renamed River Oaks Boulevard by the Hogg Brothers) running north-south through the center of the tract and terminated on the north by the country clubhouse site. Kipp's subdivision plat incorporated a wide variety of lot sizes, from a quarter acre along the east and west edges of the subdivision and the blocks farthest south of the country club to four acres (the two lots of either side of the boulevard bordering the country clubhouse site).

Kipp was responsible for creating River Oaks' scenic vistas, picturesque streets and the incorporation of differing lots sizes. This plan reinforced the River Oaks Corporation's vision and marketing. Kipp planned all the subdivisions in River Oaks, and many are quite different in their design.

For example, Kipp cleverly created the Stanmore Drive and Sharp Place courts as a way to avoid placing homes on the more heavily traveled Shepherd Drive and San Felipe Street. By turning homes inward around a horse-shoe and thus in a sense creating a common front yard, the River Oaks Corporation was able to place more homes for sale. The homes and the lot layout received much notice, and articles appeared in *Good Housekeeping* and the *Houston Post*.

In February 1937, *Good Housekeeping* extolled the virtue of planned suburbs, and highlighted the homes at River Oaks Court. The article also talks about the variety of lot sizes within River Oaks and how they fit together as a whole – this was Herbert Kipp's work in action:

Today, fortunately, in many of our cities and towns “new developments”, as new community planning is often called, are to be found. Consider these carefully. Where large tracts of land are bought and planned for residential sections by a responsible real-estate company, your risks are lessened. Good developments have the proper restrictions in architecture, intercommunity planning, parkways, recreation centers for children, fine schools, churches, and even convenient shopping centers.

This month, we illustrate a group of moderately priced houses, built on a central court, in the beautiful River Oaks section of Houston, Texas, under the direction of Hugh Potter....Here are moderately priced houses, ideally planned, which are excellent examples of the importance of neighborhood. They are a part of a beautiful general plan, where the finest residences with the largest property are at the core or heart of some 1000 acres, graduating to smaller plots which come under the same fine restrictions, careful zoning, and good architectural and building standards. Notice the care with which the garage drives are kept to the back, adjoining a boulevard; notice the space between the houses and the privacy which each house enjoys, although sharing the charm of the trees, green grass and roses of the central court...

Thus we see that the restrictions, the zoning, the careful planning by real-estate developers to keep each small section a part of a beautiful whole, maintain property values and pleasant surroundings at a high standard through a period of years. This, then, establishes the fact – Neighborhood is of First Importance.

Kipp created a park called Pine Valley Court with homes surrounding it, and on one of these lots he built his house. Pine Valley Drive has some of the few hills and swells in the Houston topography and no doubt Kipp used this to his advantage when creating the picturesque street. It is one of few streets in Houston where you might be fooled into thinking you were somewhere else.

Regarding the lot at 2455 Pine Valley Drive, the story that has passed through the previous owner to the current owner regarding the Kipp property is that Herbert Kipp was given his choice of lots in River Oaks, and he picked this one for its view and its height. One must assume that he knew every lot in River Oaks, having platted them for the corporation. 2455 Pine Valley Drive, at the intersection of Pine Valley Drive and Troon Road, and overlooking Pine Valley Court, offers views from two sides, an advantage that Salisbury & McHale would exploit in their design.

The house was listed in the *Texas General Contractors Association's Monthly Bulletin* in April, 1935. H.A. Kipp awarded the building contract to Albert A. Bertlesen for the two-story, 7 room house at a cost of \$15,000.

In addition to his work at River Oaks, Kipp was active in many of Houston's larger projects. He was the consulting engineer to Glenwood Cemetery from 1919 through the 1950s where he was responsible for the retaining walls, flood control, and drainage project of 1922. Kipp also completed the master plan for the Texas Medical Center in 1946.

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The Kipps were living in the house on Pine Valley Drive at the time of Elizabeth Kipp's death on May 7, 1962. They had no children. By 1968, Kipp had sold his home on Pine Valley Drive to the next owners, Dr. Marvin Chernosky. Herbert Kipp died on September 14, 1968. The aquarium at the zoo is named a memorial gift from the Kipps.

Marvin and Joan Chernosky

Marvin and Joan Chernosky lived in the house from the mid-1960s until 2003. Marvin Chernosky was born on March 29, 1926 in Austin. He attended the University of Texas and served in the Army during World War II. After the war, he returned to the University of Texas where he played in the Longhorn Marching Band and graduated Phi Beta Kappa with a degree in Biology. He later graduated from the Tulane School of Medicine and became a dermatologist. He was widely respected, teaching at both Baylor College of Medicine and the University of Texas Medical School in Houston. His obituary states that he was a member of St. John the Divine Church, the "Texas Exes," River Oaks Country Club, the Kiwanis Club, and the Doctors' Club. He died on August 15, 2010.

Subsequent owners include Ellen Chernosky Tippetts and David Tippetts, who sold the home to the current owners in 2007.

Salisbury & McHale

According to Stephen Fox, architectural historian, Hiram A. Salisbury (1892-1973) was born in Omaha, Nebraska. Salisbury studied architecture under a fellowship from the American Institute of Architects and later graduated from the School of Architecture at New York's Columbia University (1913-1914). He worked as a draftsman for Thomas R. Kimball from 1910-1923 and George B. Prinz from 1923-1926. Salisbury established his own architectural firm in Houston in 1926, and he is first listed in the 1927 Houston City Directory with his office in the Post-Dispatch (subsequently Shell) Building where he had his office until 1937.

Beginning in 1928, according to Fox, Salisbury collaborated on many projects with fellow architect, T. George McHale. Their projects included both residential, commercial, and churches. Among their more notable projects are the St. John's School located at 2401 Claremont, St. Stephens Episcopal Church located at 1805 W. Alabama, and numerous homes located in River Oaks, Southampton and other upscale Houston neighborhoods. In 1938-39, Hiram A. Salisbury and T. George McHale relocated their office to the River Oaks Community Center, located at 2017 W. Gray. Salisbury and McHale later moved their offices to 3501 Allen Parkway in 1945.

Per Stephen Fox, T[homas] George McHale (1903-1975) was also born in Omaha, Nebraska, and attended school at the University of Notre Dame. Following the receipt of his architectural degree, McHale became a draftsman for John Latenzer & Sons, where he worked from 1919 until 1923. In 1924 he worked for James A. Allen and Leo A. Daly. In 1925 he began working for George B. Prinz where he joined Salisbury there. They both left that firm to form their own firm in 1927. The wife of T. George McHale was Inez P. McHale, who was a celebrated Houston interior decorator. They lived first at 1106 Palm Avenue and then moved to No. 2 Courtlandt Place.

Beginning in 1930, Hiram A. Salisbury and his wife lived at 3412 Yupon (between Hawthorne and Harold). By 1953, Hiram A. Salisbury and his wife were living at 610 Saddlewood Lane. Salisbury

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continued his practice in Houston until approximately 1962, when he retired to Medford, Oregon. He had served as the President of The American Institute of Architects, Houston Chapter in 1954.

A list of identified works of Salisbury (HAS) in association with McHale (TGMcH) and others, which was researched and provided by Stephen Fox, includes:

- Masonic Temple, 118 N. 11th St., Mc Allen TX, 1926;
- Southampton Home Sensible, 2218 Dunstan Rd, 1927;
- W. L. Pearson House, Corpus Christi TX, 1927;
- Ironcraft Studio Building (altered), 3901-07 Main St., 1927;
- H. Q. Rickman House, 2223 Stanmore, 1927 (American Architect 5 Jan 1928);
- Nelms Building (H. S. Tucker & Co. Oakland-Pontiac dealership) (demolished), 2310 Main St., 1927;
- E. E. Johnson House, 949 S. Ohio Ave., Mercedes TX, 1927;
- Emergency Clinic and Hospital Unit 2 (demolished), 1316 75th St., 1928;
- Mrs. H. F. Lawson Building (demolished), 1010 Holman Ave., 1929;
- Robert H. Pentz House, 2159 Inwood Dr., 1930;
- Speculative House (Paul Weaver House), 3443 Inwood Dr., 1930;
- Benson-Hall Construction Co. House (A. E. Kerr, Jr., House), 2005 Bellmeade Rd., 1931;
- Frank L. Webb House, 2935 Chevy Chase Dr., 1931;
- W. E. Sampson House (demolished), 984 Kirby Drive, 1932, with Cameron Fairchild;
- Charles A. Perlitz House (demolished 2005), 1005 Sul Ross Ave., c. 1932;
- Stewart P. Coleman House, 6 Shadowlawn Circle, 1933;
- Wilson Saville Home, 3217 Groveland, 1933;
- W. E. Montieth House, 5 Shadowlawn Circle, 1934;
- James Anderson House, 5216 Dunlavy St., 1934;
- C. Milby Dow Bay House "Raven Moor", near Baytown, 1935;
- Henry A. Sauer House, 2229 Inwood Dr., 1935, HAS & TGMcH;
- Damon Wells House, 1659 North Blvd., 1935, HAS;
- Larry J. Langdon House, 2131 Troon Rd., c. 1936;
- Elwood Fouts House (altered), 3470 Inwood Dr., 1936, HAS & TGMcH;
- Francis G. Coates House, 3417 Del Monte Dr., 1936, HAS & TGMcH;
- J. E. Cooper House, 2247 Dryden Rd., 1936, HAS with H. Edward Maddox, and Claude E. Hooton;
- Pfeiffer House, River Oaks Boulevard (demolished May 2004);
- George B. Corless House, 1936 Larchmont Rd., 1936, HAS & TGMcH;
- H. F. Junker House, 2226 Shakespeare Rd., 1936, HAS & TGMcH;
- St. James Episcopal Church, 1500 N. Thompson St., Conroe TX, 1936-37, HAS & TGMcH;
- J. Sayles Leach House (demolished), 2207 River Oaks Blvd., 1937, HAS & TGMcH (House & Garden);
- Royston H. Patterson House, 7370 Sims Dr., 1937, HAS & TGMcH;
- John S. Bonner House, 1705 North Blvd., 1938, HAS & TGMcH;
- Lucien L. Powell House, 2111 Pine Valley Dr., 1938, HAS & TGMcH;
- Wheeler Nazro House, 3400 Piping Rock Lane, 1938, HAS & TGMcH;
- P. L. Williams House, 3612 Rio Vista Dr., 1938, HAS & TGMcH;
- Katrina Byram House, 2135 University Blvd., 1939, HAS & TGMcH;
- Ned Gill House, 949 Kirby Dr., c. 1940;
- Harry J. Kuhn House (demolished), 22 N. West Oaks, 1940, HAS & TGMcH;
- William S. Bonner House, 1412 North Blvd., 1940, HAS & TGMcH;
- E. H. Lorehn House (altered), 2198 Troon Rd., 1940, HAS & TGMcH;

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- W. Leland Anderson House, 1519 South Blvd., 1940, HAS & TGMcH;
- George C. Schmidt House (demolished), 21 Westlane Place, 1940, HAS & TGMcH;
- Dr. Paul Ledbetter House, 3508 Inwood Dr., 1941, HAS & TGMcH;
- Thomas D. Anderson House (attribution but not proven), 3929 Del Monte Dr., 1941;
- Chapel, St. John The Divine Episcopal Church, 2450 River Oaks Blvd., 1941, HAS & TGMcH and MacKie & Kamrath, Birdsall P. Briscoe, consulting architects;
- St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 1805 W. Alabama Ave., 1941, HAS & TGMcH;
- Jack Roach Building, 6000 Block of Harrisburg Blvd., 1941, HAS & TGMcH;
- Adolph Pfeffer House, 2109 River Oaks Blvd., 1930s, HAS & TGMcH;
- W. E. Parry House, 2407 Pelham Dr., 1930s, HAS & TGMcH;
- Russell L. Jolley House, 2527 Pelham Dr., 1930s, HAS & TGMcH;
- Jack Roach House, 3001 Del Monte Dr., 1939, HAS & TGMcH; Donald Kolp House, 3434 Wickersham Lane, 1940s, HAS & TGMcH;
- Parish House, Christ the King Lutheran Church, 2353 Rice Blvd., 1946-49, HAS & TGMcH;
- St. John's School, 2401 Claremont Lane, 1945-49, HAS & TGMcH and MacKie & Kamrath;
- St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital, 6720 Bertner Ave., Texas Medical Center, 1946-54, Staub & Rather and HAS;
- St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 7843 Park Place Blvd., 1946-48, HAS & TGMcH;
- North Side State Bank Building, 2010 N. Main St., 1947-48, HAS & TGMcH;
- Wyatt Metal & Boiler Works Building addition, 6100 Kansas, 1948, HAS & TGMcH;
- Dr. Blume House, Houston, 1948, HAS & TGMcH;
- Condit Elementary School addition, 7000 S. Third St., Bellaire TX, 1949, HAS & TGMcH;
- Trinity Presbyterian Church, 7000 Lawndale Ave., 1949, HAS & TGMcH;
- St. John's Episcopal Church, 514 Carter St., Marlin TX, 1949, HAS & TGMcH;
- Blue Triangle YWCA Building, 3005 Mc Gowen Ave., 1951, HAS and Birdsall P. Briscoe;
- St. George's Episcopal Church (demolished), 510 13th Ave. N., Texas City TX, 1950, HAS & TGMcH;
- St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 1208 5th St., Rosenberg TX, 1950, HAS & TGMcH;
- St. Thomas Episcopal Church, 207 Bob-O-Link Lane, Wharton TX, 1951, HAS & TGMcH;
- Wheeler Nazro House "Doe Run Farm," Washington-on-the-Brazos TX vicinity, 1951, HAS & TGMcH;
- St. John the Divine Episcopal Church, 2450 River Oaks Blvd., 1952-54, MacKie & Kamrath and HAS;
- Retreat House, 1952-53, TGMcH;
- St. John's Lutheran Church, 3920 Ave. L, Galveston TX, 1953-54, HAS & TGMcH;
- St. Michael's Episcopal Church, 1601 Lake Rd., La Marque TX, 1953, HAS & TGMcH;
- Parish buildings, St. Michael the Archangel Catholic Church, 1801 Sage Rd., 1955, TGMcH;
- Walter Shult House, 500 Hillcrest Dr., Richmond TX, 1957, HAS & TGMcH.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION AND RESTORATION HISTORY

The house at 2455 Pine Valley Drive is located on a corner lot fronting Pine Valley Drive and Troon Road. The house contains 6,423 square feet on a 19,210 square foot, irregularly-shaped lot. The front entrance is located on the north façade facing Pine Valley Drive. The east façade faces Troon Road. The house is designed in a Colonial Revival style, incorporating some elements of the Spanish Revival style, and is faced with a painted brick veneer.

The north façade features painted rectangular block under a side facing gabled roof. An eastern portion of the façade extends forward (north) from the main house and features a hipped roof. Two 6-over-9 wood sash windows with working, paneled shutters flank a brick chimney. Above, on the second story façade, are two 6-over-6 wood sash windows with working, paneled shutters. All windows feature flat brick lintels and keystone.

The entrance is located west of the projecting bay on the main block. The entrance door is wood paneled, flanked by leaded glass side lights. The entrance is recessed under a brick segmental arch with brick keystone. Above the entrance on the second story is an arched, metal casement windows.

The east façade features three 6-over-9 wood sash windows with working, paneled shutters on the first story façade and three 9-pane metal fixed windows on the second story façade. All windows feature a flat brick lintel, except for the middle window on the first story. This window is set in a paneled surround with an arched top, and an arched brick surround. An elaborate wrought iron balcony runs under the three windows.

To the south of this bay is a sun porch with multi-paned metal, casement doors on the first story facade and a bank of three 9-pane metal windows with working, paneled shutters on the second story façade. Set back from the main house but slightly visible from the street is a two-story c.1980 addition, which replaced an earlier one-story addition.

To the west of the entrance are four 6-over-6 wood sash windows on the first story façade and four 6-over-6 wood sash windows on the second story façade, all with working shutters. According to Sanborn Maps, the far west set of four windows was originally a one story part of the house which contained the garage. All windows feature flat brick lintels and keystone.

The house is currently undergoing remodeling and renovation. Per the applicant, non-original windows on the Troon Road side of the house were recently replaced with metal, 9-pane windows. In addition, windows on the second story of this side of the house were also replaced and are described above. Original windows in the living room and dining room were retained, as well as the door and the door surround. The large casement window above the front door was replaced for safety reasons, per applicant. Despite the replacement of some original windows, the overall architectural character has not been greatly altered by these changes.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

City Directories, 1923 through current

Fox, Stephen. *The Country Houses of John F. Staub*. College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 2007.

Good Housekeeping

Houston Post

Texas General Contractors Association's Monthly Bulletin, April, 1935

Various Ancestry.com resources

The information and sources provided by the applicant for this application have been reviewed, verified, edited and supplemented with additional research and sources by Erin Glennon and Matthew Kriegl Planning and Development Department, City of Houston.

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APPROVAL CRITERIA FOR LANDMARK DESIGNATION

Sec. 33-224. Criteria for designation

(a) The HAHC, in making recommendations with respect to designation, and the city council, in making a designation, shall consider one or more of the following criteria, as appropriate for the type of designation:

S	NA	S - satisfies	D - does not satisfy	NA - not applicable
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AND

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	(9) If less than 50 years old, or proposed historic district containing a majority of buildings, structures, or objects that are less than 50 years old, whether the building, structure, object, site, or area is of extraordinary importance to the city, state or nation for reasons not based on age (Sec. 33-224(b)).
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STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission recommend to City Council the Landmark Designation of the Herbert A. and Elizabeth Kipp House at 2455 Pine Valley Drive.

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Planning and Development Department

EXHIBIT A

PHOTOS

Herbert A. and Elizabeth Kipp House
2455 Pine Valley Drive



Planning and Development Department